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Letter dated 1 October 2003 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 26 September 2003, which I received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

03-53828 (E) 031003

Annex

Letter dated 26 September 2003 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to the Secretary-General of the United Nations

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the monthly report on SFOR operations for August 2003 (see enclosure). I would appreciate your making the present report available to the Council.

(*Signed*) Lord **Robertson** of Port Ellen

Enclosure

Monthly report to the Security Council on the operations of the Stabilization Force

1. Over the reporting period (1 to 31 August 2003), there were just over 12,100 troops deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

2. The overall situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remained stable during the period under review.

Security

3. The Republika Srpska trial against 18 defendants in the ORAO Aviation Bureau Case, originally planned for 28 July 2003, was postponed until 15 September 2003. The defendants were indicted for illegally producing and exporting weapons to Iraq, in violation of a United Nations embargo. The trial was postponed because the majority of the defendants apparently did not receive their summons on time. They were, however, present for the opening of the trial.

4. On 12 August, in the early hours, an empty charter bus belonging to a man from Travnik was destroyed in Sarajevo by an explosive device. No injuries were reported, but several other vehicles were damaged. The motive for the attack remains unknown. This was the fifth explosion in Sarajevo over a seven-day period. On 13 August, the European Union Police Mission (EUPM), the Minister of Security and various other interested parties held a meeting to discuss the recent spate of explosions on Sarajevo. It was reported two days later that the police had identified the perpetrators of the bomb attacks and had launched a search for four people who they believed could assist them in their inquiries.

Attacks against SFOR and SFOR operational activities

5. There were no significant acts of violence directed against SFOR personnel over the reporting period.

6. SFOR continues to contribute to the maintenance of a safe and secure environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina; collect weapons and ammunition in the framework of Operation Harvest; and monitor possible terrorist-related threats throughout the country.

7. On 6 August, SFOR headquarters released the results of Operation Harvest for the period January-July 2003. Although the statistics show decreases in the number of small arms, explosives and other items in comparison with 2002, the number of rounds of ammunition, mines and hand grenades turned in so far in 2003 have increased. In particular, the 27,515 hand grenades surrendered represent a 26 per cent increase over 2002. The SFOR spring Harvest campaign has placed special emphasis on hand grenades and the effort seems to have been productive.

8. The total number of items collected during the month of August under Operation Harvest included 552 small arms (rifles, pistols and revolvers); 252,093 rounds of ammunition with a calibre less than 20 mm; 1,403 rounds of ammunition with a calibre between 20 mm and 76 mm; 13 rounds of ammunition with a calibre greater than 76 mm; 3,984 hand grenades; 286 mines; 14,983.9 kilograms of explosives; and 2,472 other items (mortars, mortar rounds, rifle grenades, attack

rockets and hand-made ordnance). SFOR continues to collect weapons held illegally throughout the country and pursues its information campaign to encourage weapons to be handed in voluntarily.

9. On 13 August, SFOR conducted an operation to detain Ratko Mladic in Kasindol in Srpska Sarajevo. SFOR units surrounded the residence of Mladic's mother, who had died on 12 August, and established inner and outer perimeters to deny access or departure of persons from the area. SFOR personnel spoke to Mladic's daughter and wife, who expressed dissatisfaction with the operation and assured the SFOR representatives that Mladic was not present. Approximately 40 persons were present at the residence. The family and crowd eventually bowed to the inevitable and reacted in a fairly positive and cooperative manner. Mladic's daughter agreed that the house, garage, vehicles and surrounding area be searched. Members of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and local Republika Sprska police were present during the entire operation, which was concluded by 2 p.m. No injuries or damage to property were reported.

10. On 20 August, the Dynamic Response 03 (DR03) activation order was released and the transfer of authority of forces has begun. DR03 is scheduled to take place from 26 August until 24 September 2003 in the SFOR and KFOR areas of operation but will impact the entire Balkans joint operations area since forces will be deployed through Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.[a] The rapid deployment and integration concepts would be the first of many over the horizon forces concepts which DR03 sought to validate. DR03 will use the layered approach to employment of the reserve forces, with operative reserve force employment beginning on 2 September 2003 and strategic reserve force employment on 9 September 2003.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

11. During a press conference held on 21 August, the Republika Sprska Army (VRS) Chief of Defence Staff outlined proposals to close 32 accommodation sites in the Republika Sprska as well as a reduction in the number of ammunition depots from 19 to eight. Furthermore, it was stated that surplus arms that could not be sold would be destroyed with the help of SFOR.

12. On 14 August, the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina completed its review of the conscription policy within the Federation. It has now been confirmed that military service in the Federation Army will be reduced from six to five months. Furthermore, Defence Minister Miroslav Nikolic stated in a press release that he is considering a further reduction for a four-month service.

13. On 29 July, the Deputy SFOR Commander met with the VRS Chief of General Staff to discuss the VRS action plan to reduce the number of ammunition storage sites. The plan called for the relocation of ammunition from 11 sites planned for closure to three storage sites in Mrkonijk Grad, Pale and Trebinje. SFOR would assist VRC in relocating and destroying ammunition, providing transport and engineering/demolition support, if required. Following safety inspections of the new sites, VRS would determine whether ammunition should be moved or destroyed and

[a] Turkey recognizes the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

would then transport ammunition to the new sites and establish records of storage in accordance with North Atlantic Treaty Organization standards. A similar approach was being considered to reduce the number of weapons storage sites.

14. On 9 August, open sources reported that VRS intended to auction a significant arsenal of weapons, including 105 tanks, 42,048 infantry weapons, 21 air defence missiles, over 1 million mine parts and more than 13 million other munitions. According to the SFOR spokesman, the auction would commence under the strict supervision of SFOR, who had approved all weapons on the advertised list of items for sale. The auction was part of the VRS effort to reduce the size of its arsenal by the end of 2003 in accordance with the Office of the High Representative and SFOR-directed defence reforms.

15. During the reporting period, the Entity Armed Forces (EAF) carried out normal training activities, in compliance with the military provisions of the Dayton Peace Agreement. There were no reports of missing weapons from weapons storage sites in August.

16. During the period under review, there were a total of 129 EAF training and operations activities (35 VRS and 94 Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Army (VF), and 180 movements activities (134 VRS and 46 VF). A total of 453 EAF mine-clearing activities were monitored. SFOR also carried out 51 inspections and verifications of weapons storage sites: 28 VRS, 8 VF-H and 9 VF. Two VRS weapons storage sites were closed in August.

Cooperation with international organizations

17. Within capabilities and in accordance with its mandate, SFOR continues to provide assistance to the international organizations working in theatre.

Outlook

18. Operation Dynamic Response started successfully and Operations Harvest and Discovery continued to yield excellent results, with over a quarter of a million rounds of ammunition and nearly 4,000 hand grenades collected. Local authorities are showing enthusiasm and initiative in their efforts to participate in Harvest operations. Defence reform continues to be a major issue, with the problems concerning the maintenance of the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina now becoming impossible to ignore.